

Washington, D.C. – Yesterday, Reps. Rob Wittman, Eric Cantor, J. Randy Forbes, Bob Goodlatte, and Frank Wolf penned a letter to Virginia Gov. Bob McDonnell supporting his efforts to capitalize on the Commonwealth's abundant natural resources. The Congressmen noted that "Virginia has the opportunity to develop offshore energy in an environmentally friendly manner, while improving our energy security and creating thousands of jobs". The letter to Gov. McDonnell is part of a continued effort by Virginia's Congressional Republicans to place the Commonwealth and the Nation on the road to energy independence.

The text of the letter follows below:

Dear Governor McDonnell:

Congratulations on your inauguration as the 71st Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia. As you take office, we write to commend your efforts on the critical issue of U.S. energy independence, desperately needed job creation and the necessity of pursuing a strategic plan for the Commonwealth and our nation.

We are encouraged by your December 23, 2009 letter to Secretary of the Interior Salazar and your determination to lead Virginia in capitalizing on the abundant natural resources, including oil, natural gas, mineral deposits and wind resources located offshore. Virginia has the

opportunity to develop offshore energy in an environmentally friendly manner, while improving our energy security and creating thousands of jobs.

In 2008, both President Bush and the 110th Congress removed previously existing moratoria on offshore energy leasing on most areas of the outer continental shelf (OCS), including the OCS of Virginia which was included in the Mineral Management Service 2007-2012 OCS Leasing Plan. Unfortunately, the previous administration in Richmond and the current administration in Washington, D.C. have put up road blocks and detours to energy development and job creation in Virginia. We are writing to thank you for contacting Secretary Salazar and letting him know that Virginians soundly reject this delay and desire a multifaceted approach that includes offshore oil and gas development.

Responsible energy development 50 miles offshore can be done in a safe manner while creating thousands of much needed jobs. The people living around our shipyards and ports of Virginia will benefit tremendously from the demand for goods and services created by OCS development. We stand ready to work with you to move Virginia towards energy independence, offshore energy development and job creation that not only benefits our Commonwealth but the entire nation.

With kind regards, I remain

Sincerely,

Rob Wittman

Member of Congress

Eric Cantor

Member of Congress

Frank Wolf

Bob Goodlatte

Member of Congress

Member of Congress

J. Randy Forbes

Member of Congress